

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1917
By: Birdwell
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In Texas, county judges are authorized to appoint an emergency management coordinator to manage certain aspects of a county's daily activities. Texas counties may use paid or volunteer emergency managers who are sometimes highly trained in incident command and response, but these individuals are not currently authorized to use lights and sirens on a vehicle in performing duties.

It has been reported that not all Texas counties have the financial resources to own or lease authorized emergency vehicles. In these cases, an official of the county's office of emergency management may use the official's privately owned or privately leased vehicle for performing job duties. Interested parties assert that under these circumstances, such a vehicle should be considered an authorized emergency vehicle under state law if authorization for that consideration has been granted by the county commissioners court. This authorization will give the official authority to perform applicable actions when responding to a county emergency. S.B. 1917 seeks to address this issue.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1917 amends the Transportation Code to expand the definition of "authorized emergency vehicle," for purposes of statutory provisions relating to rules of the road, to include a private vehicle of an employee or volunteer of a county emergency management division in a county with a population of more than 46,500 and less than 48,000 that is designated as an authorized emergency vehicle by the county commissioners court.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.